

NCCNHR

The national consumer voice for quality long-term care

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Alison Hirschel, President
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September 26, 2008

The Honorable Pete Stark
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Stark and Representative Schakowsky:

NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care strongly supports the Nursing Home Transparency and Quality of Care Improvement Act. On behalf of our network of nursing home residents, families, and advocates across the United States, we want to express our appreciation to you for your introduction of the most comprehensive nursing home reform legislation in more than two decades.

An industry that receives almost \$100 billion a year from Medicare and Medicaid should not be allowed to hide who owns and operates facilities that provide care to some of the most vulnerable Americans. Consumers are deeply concerned by reports of declining nurse staffing levels and declining quality of care in chains taken over by private equity investors. This legislation will make nursing home operations and expenditures more transparent; enhance the government's ability to oversee care in multi-state chains, which provide much of the nursing home care in this country; and give residents and their families better information about the management, staffing, and quality of care in their nursing homes. Moreover, it will improve enforcement by increasing civil monetary penalties for the first time in over two decades and by preventing nursing homes with serious deficiencies from delaying or avoiding payment of fines by filing frivolous appeals. In addition, it will ensure that some of the money collected from fines is available to help residents, including those who are displaced when bad facilities are forced to close.

NCCNHR and its members look forward to working with you in the 111th Congress to pass the Nursing Home Transparency and Quality of Care Improvement Act.

Sincerely,

Alice H. Hedt
Executive Director

NCCNHR (formerly the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform) is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder to protect the rights, safety, and dignity of America's long-term care residents.